

BRIEFS

VA. PASTOR, WIFE STABBED AT HOME

GLEN ALLEN, Va. (BP) — Virginia Baptist pastor Hugh Mayes and his wife Carol were awakened June 15 by an intruder who stabbed both and stole around \$800 and their vehicle. Hugh Mayes, pastor of Shiloh Church in Carson, is listed in serious condition while Carol Mayes has been treated and released. The Sussex County Sheriff's Office arrested 21-year-old Maxim Lloyd Chisholm on June 16 and charged him with two counts of attempted first-degree murder and three robbery-related charges. The pastor and his wife had recently ministered to Chisholm at Shiloh Church.

DEADLINE SET FOR CAC NOMINATIONS

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — July 15 is the deadline for submitting resumes for the position of executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC), according to search committee chairman Wayne Kimbrough, pastor of Calvary Church, Greenwood. The CAC, an agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, provides Biblical perspectives on moral, social, and ethical issues. Resumes should be mailed to Wayne Kimbrough at 912 North Park Circle, Greenwood, MS 38930, or emailed to wkimbrough@cbc@yahoo.com.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEATS TWO FROM MISS.

COLUMBUS, Oh. (BP) — Jackson cardiologist Mike McMullan, a member of Broadmoor Church, Madison, and Darryl Craft, senior pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, have been appointed to serve on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Committee on Nominations for 2015-16. The committee will nominate people to serve on the SBC's boards, commissions, and committees, and will present their report to the 2016 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

A call for spiritual awakening

COLUMBUS, Oh. (BP and local reports) — Spiritual awakening, defense of marriage, and preservation of religious liberty were among key themes addressed by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) 2015 annual meeting June 16-17 in Columbus, Oh.

The meeting was highlighted by a Tuesday night prayer gathering led by SBC President Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, at which an estimated 7,000 Southern Baptists spent two hours asking God for a third Great Awakening in America and the global advance of the Gospel.

The gathering was watched by an additional 8,000 people online and broadcast on Daystar television.

The 5,407 registered messengers — up from 5,294 at the 2014 annual meeting in Baltimore last year — took several actions to advance racial and ethnic diversity within the SBC and celebrated nearly 60 missionaries during the first-ever joint missions service of Southern Baptists' International Mission Board, headquartered in Richmond, Va., and North American Mission Board based in Alpharetta, Ga., outside Atlanta.

see SBC on p. 8



REPENT AND AWAKEN — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Ronnie Floyd leads messengers in prayer at the SBC annual meeting June 16 in Columbus, Oh. Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, asked messengers to "repent of all racism and all prejudice" and called on all Southern Baptists to pray for the next Great Awakening.

Charleston coming together in prayer

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP) — Christians are uniting in prayer and benevolence across

racial distinctions in Charleston, S.C., after a 21-year-old white man massacred nine African American Christians in a June 17 prayer service at historic Mother Emanuel AME Church, said neighboring Southern Baptist pastor Keith Biggs.

"Everyone together — white, black, Hispanic, everybody — we're coming together in unity to see this not only [as] an at-

tack on people, but an attack on the body of Christ," said Biggs, associate pastor of Citadel Square Church which neighbors the site of the crime. "I mean, who can walk into a church and sit for an hour and have prayer, and then just begin to kill everybody?"

The FBI identified the shooter as 21-year-old Dylann Roof of Columbia, S.C., whose uncle told police he believes Roof received a .45-caliber



ROOF

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**MOTHER EMANUEL
AME CHURCH**

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Nine Christians

Today in Charleston, S.C., there is neither black nor white, male nor female, Democrat nor Republican. There are only mourners. While the nation reels in horror and reacts with solidarity against the unimaginable evil that descended on Charleston, S.C., during Bible study two Wednesday evenings ago, many of the people most closely affected are openly and unashamedly turning to their Christian faith to see them through this tragedy of incredible proportions.

The members of Mother Emanuel AME Church were doing what Christians are called to do. When the young, white man with the gym bag over his shoulder appeared inside the predominantly African American church asking to see the pastor, the member's first impulse was to welcome him and invite him to attend Bible study with them. He accepted their invitation. There Dylann Roof sat for nearly an hour with the pastor and church members. There he reached into his gym bag and pulled out a Glock 45 ACP pistol and began slaughtering those very church members, reloading his instrument of death at least five times, according to news reports.

The result was nine Christians killed, including the pastor. Why don't the newspaper and television reports describe it that way? Why do the headlines report, "Nine people dead..." and "Nine church-goers were killed..."? Why are they so afraid to write, "Nine Christians were taken today while displaying the love of Christ?" Is it so hard to speak the truth, to say, "Christ followers died today following Christ?"

That's who they were, and that's what they were doing. It's an outrage that our society's obsession with political correctness won't allow them to be remembered that way, except among the apparently dwindling number of us who refuse to bow to political correctness. We should not allow the culture to minimize the cause for which they stood.

There are many lessons that can be drawn from Charleston's painful experience. Here are just a few that come to mind:

■ Every church, no matter how insulated its members feel from the outside world ("That could

never happen here."), should have a comprehensive and tested security/safety plan that includes a response to such explosions of violence. Be prepared, and most likely such an incident can be stopped in its earliest stages.

GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, based in Dallas, has an excellent web page to help churches get started on their security/safety plan: guidestonepropertycasualty.org/Promotions/Secure-Sanctuary.

■ The Charleston gunman was apparently able to roam around the church for a considerable period of time, asking people about the pastor. Be sure church members know how to report suspicious behavior to someone in charge. It may amount to nothing, but they should feel comfortable doing so.

■ The pastor is almost always the focus of these gunmen. Pastor, don't try to be a hero. If the church has a security/safety plan as it should, the plan must include steps to remove the pastor from danger so the trained, pre-positioned emergency team can address the situation. It could be that the gunman's intentions can be completely thwarted if he is unable to locate his main target.

■ The Charleston gunman was quickly captured before he could do more harm because of a sharp-eyed citizen who recognized his photograph. Why was there a clear photograph of the gunman available immediately? Because the church had a sophisticated camera surveillance system in place. That's a strong measure for all churches to consider.

A side note: Mass murders get all the attention, but a good security/safety plan should include provisions for fires, natural gas leaks, severe weather, medical situations, and other calamities that, while improbable, are still more likely to occur in church than mass murder.

There's a lot to think about, but leaders should do some thinking before the unthinkable happens at their church. It is true that such preparations can run to some expense, but tragedies can happen and, as we know all too well, do happen.

Satan roams the earth, spewing evil and creating confusion for his own rebellious purposes. Make sure he has to bypass your church.

Starting here, starting now

"Can We Talk?" is a gathering for Mississippi Baptists and other likeminded Great Commission Christians set for July 16-18 at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton. Who should attend? Those who are seeking and working in multiracial ministry, those working in Mississippi's black ministry context, and those interested in learning more missional discipleship principles.

We will meet new people, strengthen existing relationships, fellowship, worship, and get equipped for working in the Mississippi of the twenty-first century. You don't want to miss this!

Why "Can We Talk?" We have to start somewhere. We have to start now. I am convinced that if we embrace waiting, we will miss out on the kingdom impact God would have us to make.

It is interesting that the major themes for "Can We Talk?" were confirmed in 2014 prior to America's challenges as seen over the last several months. Can we talk about what it might look like in the body of Christ if blacks and whites, men and women, young and old, came together to hear from God, learn from each other, and leave with a greater determination as Great Commissioned Christians to carry out the Acts 1:8 assignment in 21st century Mississippi?

We are commissioned to make disciples of all peoples. We can only do this as we are reconciled with God and each other while intentionally practicing Gospel collaboration.

Almost two years ago, the Mission Strategy Division of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board began renewed prayerful conversations about Kingdom work in the twenty-first century Mississippi mission field. In addition to seeking to reach the 57% white population of the state, consideration must be given to the second largest population segment in Mississippi — its 40% black population.

Make no mistake. Every Christian — moreover, every church of the Lord Jesus Christ — has the assignment of planting the Gospel among all types of people, including those of different ethnicities. Where do we start? Our greatest need is not just to equip whites to reach whites or



Guest opinion
with Chris McNairy

CAN WE TALK?

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

JULY 16-18
MORRISON HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH
CLINTON, MS

blacks to reach blacks, but to equip God's people to reach all types of people.

We need all hands on deck. At "Can We Talk?" we will have speakers, presenters, and facilitators who are among the best in America. We will also have an environment and a time to talk among ourselves.

We cannot expect to do the Kingdom work of the twenty-first century traveling the same roads of the past. Consider this comparison. The channels of transportation in the eighteenth century were paths and dirt roads. They were sufficient to handle the foot, horse, and wagon travel but could not handle what came with life in the nineteenth century. Paths gave way to dirt and gravel roads to handle the early nineteenth century engine-propelled cars.

see MCNAIRY on p. 11

THE BaptistRecord

Editor

William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor

Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design

Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising

Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager

Amy Massey
amassey@mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus

Don McGregor

Baptist Record

Advisory Committee:

Camille Arding, Etta T. R. Darsey, Winona Whit Lewis, New Albany Derrick Wilson, Kosciusko Carolyn Reeves, Oxford Garland Boyd, Brookhaven

Postmaster:

Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news,

communication,

and address changes

to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800

Fax: (601) 292-3330

E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



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LifeWay's president unveils major changes

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources is poised to reach a million people this fall with its Christ-centered curriculum, The Gospel Project, leaders announced at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Columbus.

During his report to SBC messengers, LifeWay President Thom S. Rainer laid out three strategic changes LifeWay is making to prepare for the future and serve churches more effectively. These strategic changes include selling its sprawling headquarters in downtown Nashville later this year and building a smaller facility nearby.

"Our leadership believes you make strategic changes when your organization is strongest," Rainer said.

Rainer explained some of its buildings date from the early 20th century and weren't designed for modern technology or collaborative work. LifeWay has moved printing, assembly, and shipping elsewhere, leaving about two-thirds of the current property unused. Employees are scattered through nine buildings on nearly 15 acres, with five times the space they need.

LifeWay expects to break ground this fall on a new facility in downtown Nashville and move into the new building by late 2017.

The second strategic change was merging LifeWay's Church Resources and B&H Publishing divisions. "It no longer makes sense to have two different publishers under one roof," Rainer said. "The fusion of these two divisions has given us an incredible opportunity to lead with LifeWay."

With that, Rainer also introduced the third major change: plans to focus LifeWay's retail stores more strongly on LifeWay products. "The stores will become more and more a local expression of LifeWay," he said.

Unifying into "One LifeWay" will position the publisher to provide better services to churches, Rainer said. One such service, a smartphone app called DevoHub, was unveiled during the SBC

meeting with live demonstrations in the exhibit hall and a presentation from LifeWay Resources Vice President Eric Geiger.

DevoHub is designed to eliminate barriers to daily Bible reading, a practice Geiger said impacts every other spiritual discipline. DevoHub will allow churches to provide devotional content to members and guests throughout the week.

"Devotionals will be sent to users' phones from your church," he said. "It's a tool to allow them to study the Scripture every single day in their personal devotions."

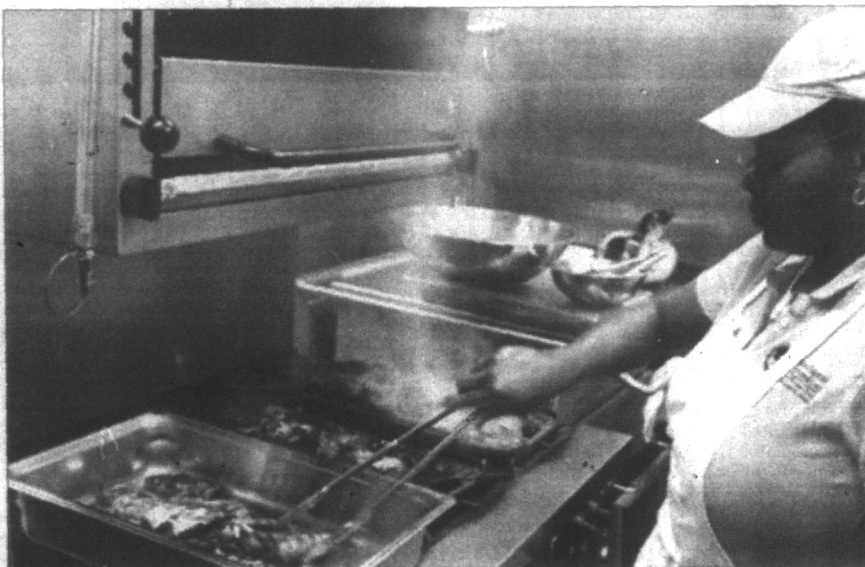
Rainer noted LifeWay has seen three consecutive years of growth in providing Bible study materials after nearly 30 years of decline. Helping drive that growth is The Gospel Project, introduced in 2012 to guide church groups in teaching theology. LifeWay initially projected 30,000 users.

"Three years later we are amazed at what God has done," said LifeWay Insights Vice President Ed Stetzer. More than 750,000 people now use the curriculum each week.

The number is expected to reach one million this fall as The Gospel Project launches a new three-year study plan, stretching chronologically from Genesis to Revelation and focusing on the role of Christ, Stetzer said.

"We believe Jesus isn't part of the Bible story — He's the point of the Bible story," Stetzer said. "Every age, from babies to adults, will study the same Bible passage each week."

The theology-oriented Gospel Project is one of four LifeWay curriculum options, each based on a different starting point, Geiger said. Explore the Bible approaches Scripture book by book; Bible Studies for Life focuses on life issues. For churches "who want their small groups to really be in sync with their pastor's sermons," Geiger said, LifeWay this year launched SmallGroup.com. The online tool allows leaders to build their own Bible study curriculum from more than 1,500 existing studies.



WITH GREAT CARE — Minerva Small, executive chef for the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC), inspects the main course of chicken prior to a recent lunch meeting at the GBC Missions and Ministry Center in Duluth. (BP photo courtesy of Georgia Christian Index)

Potluck dinners: church staple can turn into a deadly outing

DULUTH, Ga. (BP and local reports) — The potluck dinner is often seen as a treasured part of church life. It's a welcomed stereotype because of the fellowship and good times that come with overeating highly caloric casseroles, side dishes, and various meats cooked in various ways — and that's before the desserts, often enough of them to fill a row of folding tables stretching half a basketball court.

With those delicacies, though, comes real danger. A 54-year-old woman died and nearly two dozen others were hospitalized from a possible case of botulism reportedly linked to a potluck in April at Cross Pointe Free Will Baptist Church in Lancaster, Oh.

"Poor hygiene," says Minerva Small, the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC) director of food services when asked what is often the biggest threat to getting sick after a potluck. "People simply don't wash their hands enough."

Big responsibility

Small, who trained at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Tucker, Ga., says, "In preparing the food, your life is literally in my hands."

Every church group, mission team, seminar attendee, and administration and executive committee member who's had a meal at the GBC Missions and Ministry Center in Duluth falls into that category since Small arrived nine years ago. That also goes for her small group at Fairfield Church in Lithonia, Ga., where she's a member, and the Tucker

High School football team for whom she prepares the annual preseason cookout, kickoff dinner, pancake breakfast, and pregame meals when the Tigers play on Saturdays.

Altogether, she estimates overseeing food preparation for around 10,000 people in 2014 alone.

Her eyes go wide on realizing the number after doing the math. It also explains the intensity she brings to food prep safety, something she says is often overlooked at many church gatherings.

Small not only washes her hands constantly, but also the food cans themselves. "You don't know where those have been or how long they sat on a dock somewhere," she notes. "Rodents and insects carrying bacteria could've gone across them."

Small remembers learning from her grandmother in her native Jamaica. "She taught us good habits [like washing up] are hard to break but bad habits are harder, so when you're making habits, make good ones so you won't have to break them. If I didn't practice that at home, I wouldn't bring it [to work]."

To make her point, every worker under Small has to sign a server's agreement outlining cleanliness on the job.

Fun, safe, and tasty

In Ohio, public health officials have pointed to botulism as the likely cause of sickness that killed one woman and made 21 others sick. Specifically, its origins seem to have come from potato salad made from potatoes canned at

home. On average, about 110 cases of botulism are reported in the U.S. annually, with a quarter of them being foodborne.

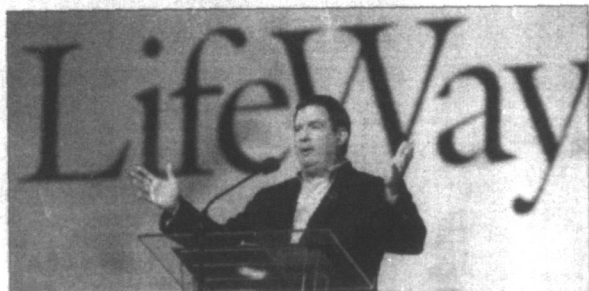
Food grown in a home garden, even organically, can bring a false sense of security, Small says. "Washing is still important because you don't know if an animal has come along and gone to the bathroom nearby."

A lot of people can their own vegetables at home, and although the overwhelming majority does so safely, those who use unsterilized instruments and practice poor hygiene pose a danger to the unsuspecting potluck attendee. Many cases of mild food poisoning go unnoticed, she says, with those affected simply staying out of work a day or so or going to the doctor rather than reporting it.

The first suspects at a potluck-dinner-gone-bad tend to be potato salad, deviled eggs, or slaw left in the sun too long. While those are common causes, Small says, often the problem has come before in the preparation process. Still, such foods are the ones to which attendees need to pay close attention in addition to meats not cooked thoroughly.

Such caution isn't to take the fun out of a staple of church life, but on the contrary to ensure it. "Today there is so much to be aware of in preparing food," Small says. "There are gluten sensitivities and food allergies. You have to be aware of conditions such as celiac disease and how cross contamination occurs when serving utensils are passed from one dish to another."

"I don't take these lightly."



LIFEWAY REPORT — Thom S. Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, gives a report and presentation during the last session of the two-day Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting held June 16-17 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Oh. (BP photo)

Wednesday night, prayer meeting night, June 17, 2015, will not be soon forgotten. A church in Charleston was having their usual Wednesday night gathering for Bible study and fellowship and prayer. While the church is predominately, historically black they welcome everyone to join them. On that Wednesday night a young man, 21 years of age, was a welcome guest and for an hour he was a part of the Wednesday worship time. As songs were sung, the word of God was taught, prayers were offered and the sweet spirit of Jesus was evident in the service, "for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7), and helps us to understand that no one knew nor suspected the rage and the premeditated expression of hate that filled the heart of that young man who came to visit that evening.

After one hour he got up and took the gun that he had brought with him and began to shoot members of that church until he had killed nine of them. The pastor of the church was murdered that night. Other ministers who were present, many of the church leaders who had worshiped there and served Jesus with that congregation, were killed in the moments that followed. After this outpouring of hate and terrorizing not only a church but a town, a state, and many across our nation, he got in his car and drove away only to be later caught and arrested in the neighboring state. The authorities brought him back to Charleston, South Carolina, where he then was charged with nine counts of murder.

Rev. Daniel Simmons, Sr. was one of the men killed that night. He had spent his life doing those things which would honor God and country. For most of his life he had been a pastor



'Hate Won't Win'

and worked with the church preaching and teaching the word of God and with gentle love had cared for the flock of God. In his early years he had served in the military and spent a tour of duty in Vietnam and now he was gone — killed with the only logic or reason being hate.

In that court setting for the arraignment of the killer one of Bro. Simmons' granddaughters spoke words of love and forgiveness to that young man and she said, "Hate won't win. Hate had won only hours before as a young man so filled with anger and bitterness toward a race unlike himself that he would meditate on how to kill some of them, but all of a sudden all that church had stood for and one of their ministers had proclaimed and our Lord desired to be instilled within every one of us came to focus as an articulate young woman simply affirmed and pronounced, "Hate won't win." One pastor observed that it was for him the most amazing outpouring of

forgiveness that he had ever witnessed in his entire life.

When I first heard of the shooting that had taken place that Wednesday night and then the pieces began to come together over what had actually taken place, one of my first thoughts was how little things have changed. I'm not talking about in South Carolina or in the South or in Mississippi. I do believe that things have changed. Relationships are significantly different among all races. Is there still progress ahead? Absolutely. Is there racism that sets up shop and grinds out hate in some hearts? Absolutely, but actually that first thought I had about how little things have changed had to do with the first worship service ever recorded in the Bible.

It is recorded in Genesis 4. Two brothers brought their gifts and came to worship God. At the close of the worship one of them, a brother named Abel, had had a wonderful experience with God and had brought his

gift to honor God. The other brother, Cain, left with a bad attitude, a rotten relationship with the Lord and an unwillingness to do what God was asking him to do. Both of them had been at the same place with the same God with an opportunity to trust Him in their lives. One did. One did not.

While the story lives itself out over the next years, one of the tragedies that comes from that first worship experience was that Cain, with his heart filled with anger, killed his brother, Abel. While there are numerous points of discussion related to the tragedy in Charleston, the reality is that it is not just a gun control issue or just a race relations issue. It is not just a political discussion point, but it is a spiritual issue, a heart problem.

We also need to stop and take inventory of what is taking place in our own personal heart life. If we are out of connection with God, we need to move toward getting in right relationship with Him and when we get in right relationship with Him, we ought to express our right relationship with our brothers and sisters regardless of what their race or ethnic background may be, regardless of their tribe or country or origin, language or spiritual heritage. One thing remains ultimately true that each of us and each of them need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ. He who came and gave His life, nailed to a tree out of hatred for Him, would live again forevermore to demonstrate and one by one bring love and a change in our lives and let us know it is true. Hate won't win. All of us can join together and most of all join with Him in living out love that makes a difference.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Lucien Church, Franklin Association:** Revival, June 27 — 28; Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon service; Jim Kultau, speaker; Jack Hollingsworth, music; Carroll Walker, pastor.

► **Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburg:** revival, June 28 — July 1; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. — Wed., 7 p.m.; Andy May, speaker.

► **Pilgrim's Rest Church, Ethel:** Homecoming and revival, June 28 — July 1; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; service, 11 a.m. followed by lunch and 6 p.m.; Mon. — Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Allen, speaker.

► **Hebron Church, Grenada:** Homecoming, June 28, 10 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; Frank Harbin and Dusty McKibben, music; Truman Scarborough, speaker.

► **Unity Church, Moselle:** Homecoming, June 28; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Valton Douglas, speaker; Garry Edwards pastor.

► **Ingalls Avenue Church, Pascagoula:** 50th anniversary, June 27 — 28; Sat., picnic fellowship at Pascagoula Beach Park, 4 — 6 p.m.; Sun., services, 10 a.m., followed by catered meal; Don Boone, speaker; George Beck, music.

► **McCool Church, McCool:** Revival, June 28 — July 1; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. — Wed., 7 p.m.; Dennis Smith, speaker; Gary Cochran, music; Richard Hill, pastor.

► **Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth:** Revival, July 5 — 8; Sun., 6:30 p.m.; Mon. — Wed., 7 p.m.; Phil Hoskins, speaker; Kara Blackard, pastor.



CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT, celebrated its 69th homecoming June 7; shown are speaker and new pastor Mike Burns and his wife, Misty, with Kathryn Alexander, homecoming chairperson.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

MPATEO, YAP OLJX NTFP, XLBYA

YAP ETWO RTO, YALY B HBEE XPSO L

QLFBSP BS YAP EL SO, STY L QLFBSPTQ

MWPLO, STW L YABWXY QTW HLYPW,

MZY TQ APLWBSR YAP HTWOX TQ YAP

ETWO.

LFTX PBRAY: PEPGPS

Clue: O = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 16:2

By Charles Marx, 1932–2004, © 2005

SBC messengers approve nine resolutions

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP and local reports) — Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention 2015 annual meeting last week in Columbus, Oh., adopted nine resolutions, some on culturally divisive issues, with almost no opposition.

All the resolutions offered in the June 16 afternoon session gained passage by unanimous or nearly unanimous votes. The messengers affirmed biblically-based stances on such topics as same sex marriage, racial reconciliation, and the sanctity of human life, as well as religious persecution and pornography. Other approved resolutions called for spiritual awakening and celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Cooperative Program.

Prior to the convention, the SBC Resolutions Committee received only four resolutions, an unusually small number. As a result, the committee initiated more resolutions than normal but committee chairman Steve Gaines, senior pastor of Bellevue Church outside Memphis, said finding topics proved no problem.

There are so many pressing issues morally and spiritually in our nation right now, it really didn't take long to figure that out," Gaines said at a news conference

after the committee's report.

He illustrated for reporters what he meant by pointing to a few of the resolutions. "When it comes to our nation, when you look back at just the last 12-18 months, racial reconciliation needs to be at the top of our list. All of us who have children or grandchildren are very concerned about pornography. All of us are concerned about abortion and not just abortion but the sanctity of life on both ends."

He added, "It's not hard in light of what's going on with [the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and what's going on in North Korea and other places to make resolutions" on religious persecution.

The approved resolutions:

- urged the U.S. Supreme Court in its decision this summer to affirm the right of citizens to limit marriage to a male-female union, reasserted the SBC's belief in the biblical view of marriage no matter how the justices rule, and called for religious freedom for individuals and organizations who conscientiously object to same sex marriage.

- called for SBC churches and entities to work toward racial and ethnic diversity in their leaders and encouraged Southern Baptists



ADOPTED — Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention's 2015 annual meeting vote on a resolutions report by raising ballots during the June 16 afternoon session at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Oh. (BP photo)

- to be "faithful ambassadors of reconciliation."

- affirmed the sanctity of human life "at all stages of development" and exhorted Southern Baptists to seek "the repeal of unjust laws and inhumane practices that degrade human life."

- denounced all religious persecution and called for Southern Baptists to pray for persecuted Christians during personal times and corporate worship.

- appealed to the North Korean government to respect human rights and urged the U.S. government to pressure North Korea to recognize the religious freedom of its citizens.

- expressed grief over the destructive impact of pornography and affirmed the power of the Gospel of Jesus to deliver those who have committed sexual immorality.

- pledged a commitment by Southern Baptists to seek

God and to pray that He would bring revival.

- expressed gratitude to God upon the 90th anniversary of the Cooperative Program for His leadership in its establishment and encouraged Southern Baptist churches to consider increases in their giving through it.

- thanked God and all those who helped with this year's meeting.

In presenting the resolutions to the messengers, the committee "knew that we were speaking on very important issues that we are facing in our culture and that I as a pastor think about that every time I preach," Gaines said.

"We want to speak the truth, but we always want to do it in love and redemption," he told reporters, "and we are not in any way angry with anybody. We love everybody but when you love the Lord, you have to say what the Bible says."

Messengers approved amendments to three of the resolutions presented by the committee. All those changes were welcomed by the committee as friendly amendments. No Mississippi Baptists were appointed to serve on this year's SBC Resolutions Committee.

Vacation Bible School

► **Moselle Memorial Church,** Moselle: July 13 - 17, 5 - 7 p.m.; for registration information, call (601) 520-0860.

► **Ramah Church, McCall Creek** July 13 - 17, 5:30 - 8 p.m.
► **Immanuel Church, Greenwood:** July 6 - 10, 6 - 8:30 p.m.; supper provided.

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Messengers propose 10 motions during 2015 SBC annual meeting

COLUMBUS, Oh. (BP) — Messengers proposed 10 motions during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 16-17 in Columbus, Oh. All but one were referred to SBC entities or ruled out of order.

By a show of ballots, messengers approved a motion by Alan Cross from Gateway Church in Montgomery, Al., that messengers commend the SBC Executive Committee's (EC) Review of the Southern Baptist Convention's Progress on Racial Reconciliation, 1995-2015. The EC review was published in the SBC Daily Bulletin, Part 2, during the annual meeting and it can be accessed through the free SBC app at the iPhone, iPad, and Android app stores.

Messengers also voted by a show of ballots to refer two motions to the SBC Executive Committee for consideration and to be reported on during the 2016 annual meeting in St. Louis:

- A motion by Steve Bailey of Calvary Church, Osceola, Ar., for the SBC to amend its bylaws to require that those who nominate SBC officers report the percentage of funds given to the Cooperative Program by the nominee's church.

- A motion by Tim Barnett of Faith Church in Faith, N.C., requesting that the SBC amend its bylaws to enable messengers

to hear from those nominated to serve as SBC officers.

Three other motions were automatically referred to SBC entities for consideration, as directed by SBC bylaws:

- A motion by Ben Chandler of First Church, Asheville, Al., that the EC and all SBC entities take a "stand in our culture for the truth and lead the way to repair the moral fabric of America, by using all means possible, including the media." The motion was referred to the Executive Committee and all SBC entities.

- A motion by Leroy Cole of Bethany Church, Andalusia, Al., that a shuttle service be provided for messengers to the SBC annual meeting and that the SBC president survey messengers as to whether they would use such a service. The motion was referred to the EC.

- A motion by Jason Lozier and Chad Stebelton of First Church, Asheville, Oh., that the SBC establish a program to help churches and associations start or improve men's ministries both nationally and globally. The motion was referred to LifeWay Christian Resources.

Four motions were ruled out of order:

- A motion by Wiley Drake of First Southern Church and Messianic Fellowship in Buena Park, Ca., to ask SBC President Ronnie

Floyd to run for president of the United States in the 2016 election, ruled out of order because it "is outside the scope of the convention's affairs and can violate the convention's tax-exempt status."

- Another motion by Drake requesting that Floyd verbalize a particular prayer promoted by the Family Research Council, a pro-family group based in Washington, D.C., ruled out of order because it "is outside the convention's authority to interfere with the language of anyone's personal prayer."

- A motion by David Roberts of Sunrise Church, Midland, Mi., that the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board, and LifeWay Christian Resources find a way to financially support Southern Baptist campus ministers. The motion was ruled as out of order because it directed, rather than requested, an action by SBC entities.

- A motion by Mike Scott of Faith Church, Iron Station, N.C., calling Southern Baptists to boycott Zondervan and Thomas Nelson publishers because they are owned by Harper Collins. Scott noted that Harper Collins published such books as a Satanic Bible and The Joy of Gay Sex. The motion was ruled as out of order because it was in the form of a resolution and was not submitted to the SBC Resolutions Committee.

Just for the Record



UNION HALL CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, presented Joyful Noise, a newly formed quartet from the church, in a 5th Sunday special program May 31.



Raini Sanford and Caroline Crawford, **UNION CHURCH, TYLERTOWN**, recently attended GA camp at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center.



GRACE CHURCH, VICKSBURG, held a graduation ceremony for Kelle Griffith May 10. Shown are Griffith and pastor H. Bryan Abel.



SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION, honored graduates Ali Crawford, Chesley Hurdle, and Blake Plowman. Rusty Fair, pastor.



Twenty-nine members from **BIG LEVEL CHURCH, STONE COUNTY**, went to Guatemala May 29 - June 6 as a part of a group of 42. The church adopted a small village, Las Flores, San Jose. The group distributed food, sanitary items, and Bibles.



FIRST CHURCH, DURANT, hosted a Hats Off to Summer garden party June 6, a Sunday School and outreach promotion. Approximately 30 women were present wearing hats fitting the theme.



UNION HALL CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, honored interim pastor Jason Case and his family with a special service May 31 after one year of service. The family and church shared a meal together after the service.

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Just for the Record



New 2015-2016 (MBMAA) **MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTRY ASSISTANT ASSOCIATION** Officers include, from left to right: Amy Massey - Treasurer; Jerebeth Mehler - 2nd Vice President; Sarah Kirby - Secretary; Shirley Sisk - President; Patricia Ethridge - 1st Vice President.



NEW HOPE CHURCH, WALNUT GROVE, licensed Mark Beasley to the gospel ministry. Shown are pastor Michael Harper and Beasley.



LIBERTY CHURCH, CARROLL COUNTY, honored the mothers in attendance on Mother's Day. Shown are oldest mother Blanche Dubard; youngest mother Ashley Gillon; and mother with most family members present, Mary Lou Dubard. Gary Tanner, pastor.

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Nine men from **UNION COUNTY ASSOCIATION**, representing Ingomar, Beulah, and Pleasant Ridge Churches, went on a construction mission trip to Moose Pass Community Church, Alaska, May 25 - June 2.

In other Church News:

► **First Church, Morton**, is presenting Celebrate America, a musical and drama, June 28, 6 p.m.

► **Edon Church, Stringer**, is hosting a Men's Conference July 17-18. Fri., ribeye dinner, 6:30 p.m. followed by conference; Sat., breakfast, 8 a.m. followed by conference. Tickets, \$30. Payment due by July 12; call (601) 729-2693 or email edonsec@bayspringstel.net

► **Highland Church, Laurel**, will host its fourth annual Summer Jam July 11, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. The event is a community-wide car and bike show with live bands, free food, and fun and games for the kids. Fee.

► **Hebron Church, Grenada**, is hosting Buddy Liles in concert July 8, 6 p.m. Love offering.

OBITUARY

Ray Edmond Bell, 82, services were held May 18, 11 a.m., at Improve Church, Columbia. Bell passed away after a lengthy illness at the State Veteran's Home in Collins on May 16. He served in the U.S. Army, mostly in Alaska. He was a graduate of William Carey College and attended New Orleans Seminary. It was there that he met his wife of 52 years, Joanne, a music major. He was chaplain at the Columbia Training School, serving there with his

wife for 26 years. He was preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Annie Bell, and a brother, Earl Bell. He is survived by his wife; a brother, Coy Wayne Bell and his wife, Peggy, Columbia; a number of nieces and nephews; and a host of friends. He served churches in Arkansas, Georgia, and Mississippi, and was a charter member of the Mississippi Baptist Chaplain's Association. Memorials may be made to The Veterans Outreach, Collins, or to the Gideons.

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MS POSITIONS

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN FOXWORTH, MISSISSIPPI IS SEEKING AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR. If interested please submit resume to Associate Pastor search committee, c/o New Hope Baptist Church, 508 New Hope Church Road, Foxworth, MS 39483.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, A SMALL COUNTRY CHURCH BETWEEN DREW AND RULEVILLE, MISS. IN SUNFLOWER COUNTY, IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 249, Drew, Miss. 38737.

PART-TIME STUDENT MINISTER NEEDED AT EAST COLUMBIA BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBIA, MS. Please send resumes to: Personnel Committee, 385 Columbia Purvis Road, Columbia, MS 39429, or email to tim@eastcolumbiabaptistchurch.com.

SMITHVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT MINISTER. Please send resume to Smithville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 52, Smithville, MS 38670.

NEEDED: FULL TIME OR BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN AT ASHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH IN ASHLAND, MS. Send resumes to Mr. Stanley Poff, 285 Carter Flats, Ashland, MS 38603 or email to stanleypoff@yahoo.com

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Awakening

Floyd, who was reelected at the meeting to a second term as SBC president, called in his presidential address for Southern Baptists to provide spiritual and moral leadership amid a time of crisis in the world that also is "our most defining hour as Southern Baptists."

Building on Floyd's address, the June 16 prayer time featured intercession led by 11 pastors and was punctuated by hundreds, if not thousands, of believers either kneeling or prostrate in the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Dozens more formed a broad array of racial and ethnic groups voiced prayers from the platform.

A resolution on "revival and spiritual awakening" said Southern Baptists "faithfully and fervently plead with our great God to open the windows of heaven and come down among His people with a fresh filling of His Spirit."

Marriage

With a U.S. Supreme Court decision on same sex marriage nationwide expected in late June, Floyd and the living SBC presidents elected since 1980 issued a joint statement that pledged love for individuals with same-sex attraction yet stated, "We will not accept, nor adhere to, any legal redefinition of marriage issued by any political or judicial body including the United States Supreme Court."

Floyd drew national headlines when he said in his presidential address that he will not perform same sex weddings.

A resolution on the "public witness on marriage" called on the Supreme Court to "uphold the right of the citizens to define marriage as exclusively the union of one man and one

woman." Southern Baptists will not waver in their defense of traditional marriage regardless of how the court rules, the resolution said.

A presidential panel discussion addressed ways churches can prepare for continuing challenges to biblical sexual morality. Panelists included Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville; R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; and Rosaria Butterfield of Durham, N.C., a former tenured professor at Syracuse University in upstate New York who made a profession of faith in Christ in 1999 and left the lesbian lifestyle. She is now a pastor's wife and defender of traditional marriage.

Religious liberty

To help combat global religious persecution, the ERLC announced the opening of an international religious freedom office in the Mideast and appointed Travis Wussow of Austin, Texas, as director of international justice and religious liberty.

Barronelle Stutzman, a Washington state florist held liable by her state's government for refusing to provide flowers for a same sex wedding, received a standing ovation when she was introduced during the ERLC report. Naghmeh Abedini, wife of U.S. pastor Saeed Abedini imprisoned in Iran for his Christian faith, briefly addressed the SBC Pastors' Conference June 15 and spoke at the Pastors' Wives Conference.

Floyd asked God specifically for Saeed Abedini's release during the convention's evening of prayer.

Two resolutions spotlighted religious persecution, with one pledging prayer for "the persecuted church worldwide" and the other specifically denouncing re-

ligious persecution and human rights violations in North Korea.

The marriage resolution stated, "the religious liberty of individual citizens or institutions should not be infringed as a result of believing or living according to the biblical definition of marriage."

Ethnic diversity

Messengers received a report from the SBC Executive Committee reviewing the convention's progress on racial reconciliation in the years between 1995-2015. A motion from the floor to commend the Executive Committee for its work was adopted, and a resolution pledged messengers' rededication to the work of racial reconciliation.

The Committee on Nominations elected for the coming year is the most diverse in the SBC's history, with 27% of members coming from ethnic and minority groups, reported Bryan Smith, chair of the Committee on Committees.

Missionary celebration

At the joint IMB/NAMB Church and Mission Sending Celebration, messengers were introduced to dozens of North American and international missionaries in a video presentation. Messengers gathered around them to pray and offered an ovation of support.

In other news

■ IMB President David Platt denied reports that a new personnel policy lowers standards for missionaries. The policy seeks to align the IMB's requirements with the Baptist Faith and Message and does not signal a shift in practice related to speaking in tongues or divorce among other missionary qualifications, Platt said.

Messengers did not ask Platt any questions despite media

reports that some planned to voice concerns about the revised personnel policy.

■ NAMB President Kevin Ezell reported 985 church starts in 2014, a five percent increase from the previous year. Some 58% of last year's church plants were non-Anglo, he said.

■ Messengers amended an Executive Committee recommendation that would have allowed the messengers present at any session of an SBC annual meeting to constitute a quorum. As amended, the Executive Committee recommendation maintains the current SBC Bylaw 35 definition of a quorum as "a minimum of 25% of those duly registered and seated messengers."

■ An Executive Committee recommendation was approved to change the name of Golden Gate Seminary to Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention. During the first-ever joint report of the six SBC seminaries, Golden Gate Seminary reported that the relocation of its primary campus from San Francisco in northern California to the Los Angeles area in southern California should be complete by the summer of 2016.

■ Messengers approved an Executive Committee recommendation to amend NAMB's

ministry assignment, enabling the convention's entity charged with facilitating North American missions to "provide specialized, defined and agreed upon assistance to the International Mission Board in assisting churches to plant churches for specific groups outside the United States and Canada."

Executive Committee leaders said in February that the possibility of military chaplains facing religious liberty constraints in their ministry to troops overseas was a key factor in the recommendation.

■ The Woman's Missionary Union auxiliary to the SBC elected Linda Cooper of Bowling Green, Ky., as president during their Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting on June 14-15 prior to the SBC annual meeting.

Cooper, a member of Forest Park Church in Bowling Green, will replace Debby Akerman, who has served as president for five years.

■ Crossover, the annual evangelistic blitz preceding the annual meeting, yielded at least 4,950 Gospel conversations and 345 professions of faith.

■ Nine resolutions addressed pornography, the sanctity of human life, and the Cooperative Program, among other subjects.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director
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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

APRIL 2015

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MAY 2015

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Brian & Christen
Barrett & Jeremy Cooper
Blair & Irene Powers
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Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Ball
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Ball
Ms. Christina Osborne
Ms. Mary Stuckey
Ms. Ruth Oswalt
Ms. Sarah Aultman
Ms. Shelley Griffin
Parker & Price Russell
Various Birthday Guests
Jonathan & Lindsay Ball
Ms. Julia S. Fortenberry
Mrs. Bertha Nell Bounds
Rev. Randle S. Poss
Jill Childress
Mr. & Mrs. Rex Cowart
Casey Childress
Donna Criss
Mr. Jody Criss
Dad of Bertie Kennedy
Ms. Bertie M. Kennedy
Patricia Duckworth
Sam, Diane, Lydia & Elizabeth Long
Dr. Bill & Marion Duncan
Mr. & Mrs. James H. Chase
Mrs. Grace Pinnix French
Mr. & Mrs. Tommy Pinnix
Sue Gregory
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Birthday Club
Sheila Turnage

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MAY 2015

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Is This of God? • 1 John 4:1-6

While a student in a public speaking class in high school, I recall an interesting assignment the class was given. Each student was required to stand in front of the class and share two true accounts from their life and one story that was false. The rest of the class was then given the task of deciding which of the three stories were not true. We were told to watch for body language, tone, eye contact and other subtle features when one is speaking. Some stories were obviously false due to their outlandish nature or the nuances of the speaker. However, the ones proving to be more challenging were those who could tell an untrue story without any change in their tone or body language. They were in fact, "good" liars.

Truth is something that seems to be increasingly scarce in today's society. We have witnessed news anchors of high regard embellish stories, those in public office betray our trust and even those in ministry fall into the trap of lying and greatly damaging their reputation and effectiveness. It would be safe to say that most parents hope to instill in their child the value of telling the truth and not being dishonest. So, where does someone leave the path of what is true and genuine? While there are many answers to that question, I

would submit to you the simple answer is pride. It is not only those in the public eye that could succumb to sharing falsehoods. Each one of us must be willing to share the truth in love and grace. We are not responsible for how others respond to the truth of Christ. However, we are responsible for sharing truth will all those we come in contact with. As one friend of mine says, "The truth will indeed make you free, but before it does; it might make you angry."

In his day, John was not writing to make people angry.

This is seen in 1 John 4:1 when he calls the readers "beloved" or "friends." He was writing so they may not neglect Christ (who is Truth), and be discerning in which prophets they listened to and followed. Perhaps it would have been easier if the Pinocchio effect could have been in place. This way each time a false teacher said something erroneous, the offender's nose would suddenly grow.



Explore the Bible

with Bobby McKay

Of course, this is a silly and impossible solution to a real and growing problem in John's day as well as ours.

So-called "religious" programming on our televisions and internet are filled with teachers claiming to be sharing the truths of the life and teachings of Christ and in reality, they are instruments of Satan being used to hinder the church and confuse those who have yet to believe in Christ.

In the local church we have something much greater than Pinocchio: we have the Holy Spirit leading us in discernment.

While we are called as Christians to be discerning, there are some in your congregation or Bible study class that are specifically gifted with discernment. These are the folks that usually have an eye for details and enjoy researching and fact-finding. Of course, this does not mean these individuals are always right, but they are needed in a culture where truth is always under attack.

In the opening verses of 1 John 4, John presents the best test for anyone claiming to teach with a Bible in his/her hands. That test is Jesus. If you are teaching Scripture and it does not mirror the life and teachings of Christ, you have a problem. For certain, there are false teachers "out there," but how about in our own churches, pulpits and bible studies? Are the teachings we share or hear based on our own opinions or are they rooted in the story of Christ? Time is too short and the stakes are too high to tolerate false or untested teaching. Anyone that handles the Scripture should be willing to humbly receive questions. Questions are the sign of an honest and growing faith. If you are a teacher in a class or Bible study, it is not your job to be popular or trendy. On the other hand, it is your responsibility to tell the truth and make much of Jesus.

If someone begins to teach and live the message of Christ, they will be noticeably different from the world. The difference will not only be seen in the lost world, but often among Christian circles. The truth does not only confront the lost, but the saved as well. Share the truth of Christ and it will set you and your audience free.

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

Move Beyond Failure • Joshua 7:13-15, 19-21, 25-26, 8:1

The Background

The Israelites had just experienced the great defeat of Jericho and witnessed God's power and might. During the defeat of Jericho, God had instructed them to destroy everything in the city, not to save anything. (Joshua 6:17, HCSB) One of the Israelites, Achan, kept some of the things for himself that were supposed to be destroyed. The next city the people of God were to conquer was the city of Ai. In the process of fighting this battle, Joshua sent spies to plan a battle strategy. The spies came back and felt that the city would be easy so they had only to send up a portion of their army. But, as they went up to fight the battle of Ai, 36 Israelite soldiers were killed and the entire army was chased back and ultimately defeated.

They came back to the camp discouraged. Joshua cried out to the Lord and asked why He had forsaken them in this battle. God instructed Joshua to get up off of the ground and told him that they had broken His law in the battle of Jericho. The story today begins in verse 13, where God told Joshua to lead the people of Israel to reveal where the sin in the camp was, or who stole the devoted things. The person who stole would be killed. After this, they identified Achan as the one who had stole the devoted things and he confessed.

Joshua 7:25-26

The Israelites take Achan, his family, his family and his tent, all of the things he possessed outside the camp and stoned him. After the stoning, they burn everything and then bury it under a pile of stones. God instructed Joshua to now go and fight Ai, because the victory now belonged to the Israelites.

Ouch! There was no grace and mercy shown to Achan. His willful disobedience and blatant disrespect for God's rules forfeited his protection and position from God. Thankfully, because of what Jesus did on the cross, God's forgiveness for sin looks differently for us.

Walk: Lack of confession and repentance can hinder relationships. It destroys trust, reputation and unity. Do you have some personal sins that threaten your marriage, career, friendships or/and church family? Take time today to seek God and repent.

1 John 1:9 reminds us, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God's forgiveness is immediate and permanent. We confess, He forgives. We can then live in freedom and peace.

For further reading: Check out "Killing the Church" by Dr. Jeff Parker, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Jackson. Great resources on understanding how a voice

of truth in our life can impact our walk with Christ.

Run: Have you considered how unconfessed sin in your faith community

has forfeited God's power and the way that He uses your church to reach the lost? Is your church limited because God's spirit is not moving in your worship services? Spend time in extended prayer asking God to reveal the sin and convict those who are participating. Be sure your heart and walk are in line with God's plans and purposes as you pray.

Soar: Unconfessed sin among our churches can affect God's blessing and His use of a body of believers. You perhaps have all witnessed the effects of a Christian Brother or sister engaged in unconfessed, unrepentant behavior. You may have witnessed this rebellion again God affecting your faith community.

Pray and ask if God would want you to speak to those who are in sin. When you sense His direction (and only then), you can move forward with kindness, boldness and peace. Leave any expectations for repentance at the door. Trust the Holy Spirit to bring about conviction and renewal. Remind your fellow Christian that God's forgiveness is complete and unparalleled. In Psalms 103:12 the scripture reminds us, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Be sure any confrontation balances God's Holiness with His compassion. Be sure to read next week's lesson and you will see how Israel responds to the Eastern tribes (what they believe to be) disobedience and disrespect of God's best.

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

Bible Studies for Life

with Beth S. Bowman



CHARLESTON

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handgun as a birthday present, Reuters reported. Roof was arrested without incident after a traffic stop on the morning of June 18 in Shelby, N.C. In what police are calling a hate crime, a white man identified as Roof sat calmly in the historically African American church during

the prayer service and, without warning, shot the pastor, state Sen. Clementa Pinckney, and eight other worshippers before leaving the scene. A five-year-old child escaped injury by pretending to be dead, and one woman was purposely allowed by the killer to live so that she could report what had happened, it was widely reported.

"As everybody said on TV, it goes deeper than just hate. To

me, this is something that's very demonic, to be able to do that. It's a big spiritual warfare, so we're coming together," Biggs said. "We've just got to pray and seek direction, see how we can help one another, see how we can pray to get this action and so forth out of here."

"Everybody is very calm right now and just looking for answers. Just be praying for us," Biggs requested.

Republican South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley also hosted a citywide prayer meeting June 13 in Charleston. "Michael, Rena, Nalin, and I are praying for the victims and families touched by tonight's senseless tragedy at Emanuel AME Church. While we do not yet know all of the details, we do know that we'll never understand what motivates anyone to enter one of our places

of worship and take the life of another.

"Please join us in lifting up the victims and their families with our love and prayers."

About 5,000 people attended a statewide prayer service June 20 in the local coliseum, Biggs said. "We're in the middle of [spiritual warfare], but God is faithful and He will come out on top. We've just got to be faithful, strong, and trusting."

Real Love • 1 John 4:7-21

Love. It is perhaps the most written about, sung about, talked about and thought about subject of all time and yet, the world as we know it is in a critical shortage of it. As I write these words, the top news story of the day is the horrible massacre at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Such evil and hateful acts seem to claim a victory against love on a regular basis. How can we as believers demonstrate and inspire love in our realm of influence? While we are at it, just what is love and how do we know when it is genuine? The answer to these questions can be found, in part, in today's lesson.

With love being such a casually used word in our culture, it is helpful to know the One who created love to begin with. Many have made love only an emotional attachment, saying they love their car, football team or the nearest fine dining restaurant. John reminded Christians that God is both the standard and source of love. Did you know the most distinguishing trait of a believer is love? The more you and I mature into Christlikeness, the more we will love others. It really is just that simple. However, at the same time, it is just that hard. When

we love as Christ loved, we are making a sacrifice in which we are not guaranteed a positive response.

John's writings were written in love and also expressed love as a theme. John used the word "love" or some form of it over 40 times in 1 John. John was the kind of guy that we need in more of our local churches. As you read 1 John 4:7 you can almost sense in his writing a plea for all people to come together in love. This unifying theme of love is not based on a feeling, it is based on a fact. It is a

fact that the love of God is manifested through Jesus. He goes on to remind us of the greatest expression of love that the world has ever known (1 John 4:10).

I have in my office several mementoes from various church members over the years. Some are paintings, some are pottery or other handmade gifts. The funniest is a note that came with a pine tree car air freshener. It



Explore the Bible

with Bobby McKay

reads, "Whenever you feel that new preacher feel beginning to wear off, put this around your neck and you'll smell all new again." The sweetest are from the children in our church. A birthday card, a picture made from magic markers and other gestures let me know I am loved. One gift was from a then-5 year old child in our church. It was written on a sticky note and has these words,

"I love you Bobe." Pay no attention to the spelling of my name, it brings me great joy.

Everyone appreciates being loved

and having someone express love to you. John's reasoning is simple: "If God has loved us in a powerfully demonstrative way, we should do the same for others (1 John 4:11). In the second paragraph, I made the statement that sometimes loving others is hard. Take for example again the Charleston church shootings. Dylan Roof, the apparent killer, is probably

not at the top of your list of people to love right now. But Jesus loves him. And Jesus loves you, too. You and I cannot love others without the love of God first residing within us. That is only made possible through the selfless atonement of Christ. Verse 19 reminds us that we are able to love only because God first loved us.

Love is more than an emotion, more than something said, more than something made. It is the imperative command for the church. Love is the greatest imprint and mark Christians can leave on the world. It should be our calling card. Love is eternal. If there is any hate toward anyone within your heart and you call yourself a Christian, you are a liar (1 John 4:20).

If you have Christ in your life, you also have love. The encouraging word, hug, or acts of service are all great ways to show this love I speak of. The greatest expression of love is to share with someone the story of Christ and His forgiveness. You do not have to be an ordained minister to share the love of Christ, just available. One more bit of help: a sticky note goes a long way!

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

Work Through Conflict • Joshua 22:11-12, 15-18, 26-27, 33-34

For our wedding anniversary last year, Mark and I went to a new local restaurant. Several people had eaten there and given it fantastic reviews so we were anxious to try it. As we waited for our table, I glanced around. To my surprise, every single person in the establishment had the name of an alcoholic beverage printed on their glasses and it was "as big as Dallas!" Imagine my chagrin, after being seated that we were served our cokes in the exact same glasses! Both of us burst out laughing! Without all of the information, my earlier assessment was completely wrong. Israel does the same in Joshua 22, but thankfully wise leadership prevents a war.

For seven years, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had served Israel faithfully. Even though they already had their inheritance promised to them through Moses, they stayed many years to help the other Israelites. Now that the land was conquered and fully distributed to the tribes, they could go back to their families and lands on the eastern side of the Jordan. Before they left, Joshua gives them an exhortation, in verse 5 which states, "Be very careful to obey the law that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you." He continues by telling

them to love the Lord and to live exactly as the Lord wanted them to. He encouraged them to be faithful and to serve the Lord with all of their heart and soul. This wise send-off had to be tough for Joshua. He had lived with the people of these tribes for many years. I can picture him with tears in his eyes and sweet memories on his mind giving them a last reminder and a blessing. The scripture tells us that he

sent them home with all that had accumulated over the years and he exhorts them to share all of that with each other.

Joshua 22:11-12.

The group had Joshua's last words on their minds and hearts and they began their trek to their homeland. Scripture tells us the first thing they do was to build an altar between their property lines. And that's when the story gets very interesting. "Someone" told "someone else" who told "someone else"...you may have heard

this type of rumor before. The rest of the Israelites heard that the eastern tribes had built an altar. They had an emergency community meeting and made a knee jerk reaction—they are going to do to war to kill them for building a pagan altar.

Thankfully, someone with a cool head decided to send Phinehas, a priest to the land of Gilead and ten leaders to check things out. So, Phinehas and the lead-

ers set out to ask the tough questions and find out why these tribes were in rebellion. They didn't mind words, ei-

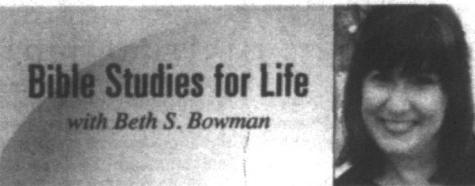
ther. They asked specifically and directly (in my words), "What in the world are you doing...How could you?" These people of Israel were so quick to judge that they did not take time to consider why the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had built the altar.

Then the tribes answered quickly of their reasons for building the altar. They

told how the leaders that their altar was not for themselves but instead for a reminder of their faith. This altar would serve as a witness between them. This physical structure would serve as a witness between the two groups and future generations that both groups worship the very same God. The tribes had constructed the altar as a replica of the Lord's altar, not to replace it but instead to serve as a tangible reminder. Phinehas leads the group from Israel to understand that the desires of the tribes were only to honor God in building the altar and to education future generations about their faith. The story concludes with the people of Israel having heard the report and backing down from the fight.

What a fantastic lesson when we are so quick to judge when we "hear" or "see" what we believe to be ungodly behavior from our Christian brothers and sisters. Let's follow the lead of Phinehas to go, ask and listen. The body of Christ deserves our best communication and understanding!

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.



Bible Studies for Life

with Beth S. Bowman

MCNAIRY

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In addition, train tracks were laid for getting people and products from one place to another. The twentieth century brought paved roads, the national Interstate highway system, and mass air travel.

The same changes are comparatively true for the

Kingdom work of the church. The mission field of the state of Mississippi is dynamic. In fact, it is changing at a faster pace now than at any other time in history. In the twenty-first century, Mississippi's demographics are increasingly diverse. This diversity is overwhelmingly racial (black and white).

Among Christians the Gospel is our constant. We must

consider current realities with new and various delivery approaches to planting the Gospel among all peoples. Can we start the needed conversation about this challenge? Even more so, can we move from talking to missional action?

God is using Mississippi Baptists to do what has never been done in our state. We have a great opportunity to demonstrate to the world

what God is doing. We can join our hearts in prayer, our heads in missional conversation, and our hands and feet in practical application for Gospel collaboration.

The Kingdom is counting on us. Who should attend "Can We Talk?" All of us. Will you join hundreds of Mississippi Baptists and other people who will be a part of this historic gathering?

McNairy is the facilitator of the Urban Fusion Network and a contract consultant with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). For more information, he can be contacted at (678) 985-4305, or urbanfusionnetwork@gmail.com. Web page: mbcb.org, then click on "Can We Talk?" in the slider at top of page.

Kentucky woman elected president of WMU

GROVE CITY, Oh. (BP) — The Woman's Missionary Union auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention elected Linda Cooper of Bowling Green, Ky., to serve as national president during the second day of their Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting June 14-15 at First Church of Grove City, Oh., prior to the convening of the 2015 SBC annual meeting.

Cooper, a member of Forest Park Church in Bowling Green, will replace Debby Akerman of Myrtle Beach, S.C., who served as president for the previous five years. In her final presidential address, Akerman thanked those present at the meeting for the opportunity to serve WMU.

"Contrary to what some might think, you are not sitting in circles with your hair of blue simply reading missions articles," she said. "You are praying for our missionaries as the day begins; going out in active community missions to the many places where the hurting are found."

"You are going out through relationship building and steady witnessing to the up-and-out as well as the down-and-out. And you are leading missions teams to go across North America and to the nations of the world."

Surrender and service

Between the two days of the meeting, some 500 people attended to hear how missionaries and ministry workers live out the year's theme, All for You, through wholehearted surrender, sacrifice, and service.

Capt. Michael Coleman, a U.S. Army chaplain who also serves with Southern Baptists' North American Mission Board (NAMB), challenged the audience to educate themselves about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), pray for those who are hurting, and be a friend to those who come to their churches.

Coleman served on WMU's initial task force to begin the organization's Project HELP: PTSD. He said it was important for churches to be prepared for those who are returning to the U.S. from battlefields, but



NEW PRESIDENT — Linda Cooper (front) of Bowling Green, Ky., newly elected president of the Woman's Missionary Union auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, is presented by Wanda Lee, executive director and treasurer of the WMU, during the morning session of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 17 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Oh. (BP photo)

he warned it was not a strategy for building church membership.

"This is not an outreach opportunity for your church," he said. "This is 'inreach.' You can be that back row Baptist who grabs that person by the hand and says no matter what you look like, no matter who you are, I'm going to walk with you along the way."

Missions in mud hut?

Christian workers David and Alicia (last name withheld) shared about their ministry work in Southeast Asia where their family of four has served for three years in a city of three million people, finding ways to share the Gospel with unreached people groups.

David said serving God may make some think of moving to a mud hut Africa or working in a soup kitchen, but God gifts people

in different ways to serve Him. For David, this means being a travel agent. Running a tour and travel business is a vehicle to share the Gospel with hard-to-reach groups that otherwise would not welcome foreigners.

Many skills and giftings from the Lord — from travel agents to businesspeople — can be an asset to the Kingdom of God, David said. Seek the Lord's direction on how God is calling you to serve and then "be obedient immediately."

WMU emphasis book

Marion G. "Bud" Fray, a retired International Mission Board missionary who served in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and Kim Davis, former missionary, are the authors of this year's WMU emphasis book, *Both Feet In: A Journey to Surrender, Sacrifice, and Service*.

Fray said the book was not quite finished — in fact, far from it. He hoped attendees would take it home and "help write the next chapters" in their own stories of surrender to the Lord.

"Heaven happens when both the almighty Father from heaven and a usable vessel on earth come together," Fray said. "You can be God's instrument for heaven to happen back in your churches."

Passing the gavel

As remembrance of her service, Akerman presented national WMU a new gavel made of Cocobolo wood with a woven handle, artfully crafted by master wood turner James Silva of Wareham, Ma., and Akerman's brother, Nantucket basket crafter Robert E. MacNevin, Jr.

The gavel represented Akerman's enjoyment of organizational work and respect for order in conducting WMU business, as well as her family's New England heritage and their support during her time as president.

She also passed on three items to newly elected Cooper to be safeguarded by the current WMU president: a book on historic WMU leader Fannie E.S. Heck and two bejeweled rings from past WMU presidents.

"Finally, with this newest gavel, I pass the leadership of WMU to you," Akerman said through tears. The audience gave a standing ovation as the outgoing and new presidents embraced.

Cooper said she had "big shoes to fill" in following Akerman, who led with "such grace and such a godly spirit."

"Please pray for me, for national WMU, and for those lives who are being eternally changed through you as you lead missions education each week through WMU," Cooper said in closing. "With God's help, I will live wholeheartedly for the Lord, moment by moment, as I serve WMU because I, too, am 'both feet in.'"

The next WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting will be June 12-13, 2016, in St. Louis, Mo.

First Person: 'Wrong side of history' right place for Christians

By Bob Stith
Correspondent

"You're on the wrong side of history."

I've heard this quote often in recent months, particularly in regard to views on same sex marriage. It is intended to leave the impression that the world has moved on and those who disagree with the popular sentiment have been left behind.

It also removes any possibility for rational discussion because, "Surely you must understand that no intelligent person believes like you."

This type of reasoning has swayed many both inside and outside the church on the issue of homosexuality. Almost daily we hear of some politician and/or well-known Christian leader deciding that the church (including Judaism) has gotten the homosexual question wrong for more than 3,000 years.

The wrong-side-of-history argument has traction, at least as it pertains to the rapidly changing views in our culture. "Culture is dramatically shifting on the issue," said Ed Stetzer, executive direc-

tor of LifeWay Research. In 2011, 44% of Americans believed homosexual behavior to be sin, according to LifeWay Research. In 2014, only 30% believed this.

The question is, has the church missed a turn somewhere in the last 50 years?

Funny thing about history. It is history — not current events. History doesn't tell its full story until it is observed from a safe distance of decades, even centuries.

Robert Baker taught church history for many years at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth. He was fond of saying, "History turns no sharp corners." He would point out that events that seemingly burst on the scene overnight were seeds from years ago, even decades before.

In every generation, biblical Christianity has been on a collision course with cultural morality. This era of human history is no different.

In an attempt to rightfully show compassion for those who experienced divorce, we often neglected to help Christians learn from the mistakes of others and failed to prepare young people for the challenges of marriage.

We made similar mistakes in dealing with abortion, adultery, living together outside of marriage, pornography, and other moral issues. Our mistake was not that Christians didn't oppose these sins. It was that we focused more on the prohibi-

tions than setting forth the fact that living according to God's standards brings true joy and peace that nothing this world offers can match.

As often happens among Christians, experience trumps biblical truth. We listen to the stories of those who've been wounded by well-meaning Christians. "When it comes to support for [same sex] marriage, a lot of it depends" on who one's friends are, Stetzer observed. "Those who have gay or lesbian friends are the most open to gay marriage."

I was once attempting to change the spark plugs on a car I had recently purchased, but my access was impeded by a heavy metal plate. Nothing else was connected to the plate, and I could see no purpose for it, so I put the plugs in and reassembled everything minus the plate. A few weeks later I wanted to impress a friend who was an actual mechanic so I told him the story.

He was silent for a moment and then politely informed me that on my particular model, this plate was designed to help dissipate heat from the engine. Oh, I guess the designers knew what they were doing — perhaps a little better than a seminary student who fancied himself a mechanic.

English writer and philosopher G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) said, "Don't ever take a fence down until you know the rea-

son why it was put up." We no longer seem particularly interested in why the fences are there. We are more intent on cutting down every law that stands in the way of every man doing that which is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 12:15; Deuteronomy 12:8).

We had best carefully consider the designers' handbook before we too readily jettison His instructions.

Our churches must do a better job of preparing people to stand in the winds that are reaching hurricane force. We must take seriously the responsibility to train believers to speak compassionately and redemptively about these issues while standing strong on the biblical foundation.

Every great revival has been led by those who were willing to be on the wrong side of history. In the eyes of the world, Christians have always been "on the wrong side of history." It's the nature of life modeled after a Savior whose counter-cultural teachings sent Him to death on a cross and forever changed the course of human history.

Stith (bstith777@juno.com) is founder of Family and Gender Issues Ministries in Southlake, Texas. He formerly served as the Southern Baptist Convention's national strategist for gender issues. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.



STITH